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175-x The seven principal deities of the Georgian pantheon were associated with the cult of the Sun, the Moon and the five planets and the worship of Kartlos-Teshub-Armazi, the national god in his various transformations, continued to hold the subconscious religious mind of the Georgians throughout the whole period of Christianity. St. George was the Cappadocian successor of the Hittite Teshub, and in Georgia the Christian Saints George and Elias retained many of the attributes accorded in pagan times to the solar-lunar deities Kartlos-Armazi and Zadeni. Wesendonk has noted that on the Georgian representations of St. George are the Sun, the Moon and the five stars, which nowhere else occur, while Javakhishvili has pointed out that in the worship of St. George pagan features exist, and that St. George is in reality a Moon-god. Seven was a significant and often sacred figure in Georgia, and in the Middle Ages the Seven Heavenly Bodies symbolized the seven parts of the Georgian Kingdom. But while sun- and moon-worship may be native to Georgia, it is probable that the worship of the five planets and the sanctity of the number seven indicate early Mesopotamian influences upon the native cults.

Wesendonk has suggested that the Cappadocian St. George became identified with the Georgian solar-lunar deity at the period of the introduction of Christianity into Georgia under influences from Syria. He continued to be associated with the Seven Heavenly Bodies and he was worshipped as the older gods Armazi and Zadeni had been, most often on mountain-tops and heights.

● 776 173 St. George holds the supreme place in the devout heart of the Georgian peasant, and he is reckoned even before Christ. Javakhishvili has observed that in the folk-lore of the people, St. George, and not Christ, is considered as the more important being, and he is regarded as the first in rank and the greater god. He is the protector of the human hearth, and of shepherds, and he guards man and beast and crops against the destructive forces of nature, even against the caprices and the evil humour of God. Only a second place is accorded to Christ. The Khevsurs address St. George in the words "*Oh God, thou Holy George.*" The Svanians [796] respect St. George more than the Creator and consider him as more powerful than God. The *Khatoba*, the great feast of St. George, in August, is made to fall on the night of the full moon, and the ceremonies connected witht his nocturnal celebration are none other than the pagan rites of

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Giorgi Mtatzmindeli ("of Holy Mount"), who, in addition to his numerous writings, had no little influence on the relations of Byzantium and Georgia.

As so often happens in life, the incidental doings of these holy men were far more important than their lives' works in copying and dogmatizing. The Georgian monasteries abroad became universities for the youth of Georgia, and in their travels they absorbed the knowledge of the Classic philosophers who had passing fashions in Byzantium, and they learnt the ways and the practical achievements of the great Mediterranean world. By contrary, the renown of the Georgian monasteries in the orthodox Byzantine Empire impressed the rulers of the West with the signal virtues of the Georgian nation, and the imposing theologians from Athos visited the capital as the diplomatic and, not infrequently, the matrimonial agents of the Georgian kings. Again, the returning studious youth, and the divines who came back to Georgia to forage among the wealthy and uneasy-minded, carried with them admiration for and desire to emulate the magnificent intellectual organization of the Byzantine Church. In Georgia the monastic system had been developing from early times. Grigol Khandzteli, in the ninth century, had founded a group of monasteries along the Chorokhi, and the excellent educational system which he introduced at Khandzti, Shatberdi and Tbeti was copied and encouraged by the Georgian kings, to the extent that in the eleventh century universities were in being at Gelati in Imereti, and at Alaverdi and Gremi in Kakheti.

The vast literary output of the monks, in Georgia and abroad, is of little interest except to the specialist and to the student of illumination and book-making. It is only the "Lives" of Georgian Saints which have a certain historical interest and their own originality, in that the subject-matter is new. These "Lives" include those of Prince Murvano (St. Peter of Iberia); St. Nino, the Illuminator of Georgia; Saints Ioanné and Evthimé; St. Grigol Khandtzeli; St. Abo; and St. Giorgi Mtatzmindeli. Of these, the *Life of St. Abo*, who lived in the eighth century, is by far the most entertaining. St. Abo was originally a perfumer's boy in Baghdad. He met with Nersé, the son of Adarnasé Kuropalatês of Kartli, who was held prisoner in Baghdad, and accompanying the prince back to Georgia, was converted to the Christian faith. Later Nersé was involved in war with the Arabs, and accompanied by Abo, fled to Osseti and then into the land of the Khazars. After many adventures, they found their way to

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538 Abkhazeti and finally returned to Tiflis, where Nersé made his
● 774 submission to the Arab Emir. Also lived for three years in peace, but the fact that he was a renegade from Islam finally came to the ears of the Emir, and a painful death removed the poor young perfumer to the calendar of Georgia's Saints.

814 The pursuit of historical studies was a minor interest of the Georgian monkish class, but with the patronage of the Georgian kings and of the lesser territorial magnates, the writing of chronicles and chronologies and the translation of Byzantine historical works became a favoured occupation.

Wakhtang VI of Kartli, an unfortunate king but an enthusiastic student, caused many of the early chronicles to be collated, and in the first decade of the eighteenth century this work of revision and completion of *Kartlis-Tzkhovreba*, or the *Life of Georgia*, was finally accomplished. *Kartlis-Tzkhovreba* is generally referred to as *The Georgian Annals* and is to be distinguished from the historical work of Wakhtangi's son, Wakhushti, which includes also local histories of the different Georgian principalities down to the middle of the eighteenth century. Again, the so-called *Armenian Chronicle* published by Brosset is a mediæval Armenian translation of a *Georgian Chronicle* which ends with the reign of David II.

The various existing manuscripts of King Wakhtangi's work which were made in the eighteenth century differ in certain details, and there is further an earlier manuscript of the seventeenth century, known as Queen Mary's, which indicates that attempts to co-ordinate the original sources of Georgian history had been made before King Wakhtangi's time.[1]

The earliest source of Georgian written history was a manuscript known as *The Conversion of the Georgians*, which was compiled in part by the disciples of St. Nino and in part at a latter date. A manuscript of the work attributed to the monk Mroveli, who lived at the end of the seventh or beginning of the eighth century, was known. To the ninth century belongs an *Anonymous Chronicle*, with a short *History of the Kings, Gods, Bishops and Catholicoses of Georgia*; and to the tenth century, *The Exaltation of the Living Cross of Mtzkheta* and an account of the *Conversion of the Somekhians* (Armenians). These works are essentially ecclesiastical. In the eighth century, however, Juansher Juansheriani wrote his *Narrative of the House of Wakhtang Gorgasali* (Gurgaslani), and the eleventh century saw *The Chronicles of Sumbat*, in which Sumbat Davitisdze

[1] For the sources of the *K.-Tz.*, see the works of Th. Jordania, Javakhishvili, Taqaishvili, Kekelidze and Janashvili.

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Chevsur
Svan

Up to the present time it is impossible to determine with certainty what kind of religion the Pshavs and Khevsurs profess.[9] While respecting the cross, St. George, the apostles Peter and Paul, and Archangel Michail, at the same time they worship such gods as Anatori, Nakharela, Pirkushi, Kopala, Iakhsari, and many others. These tribes were converted to Christianity by some Georgian preacher, but having no support from anybody, the religion grew weak owing to the ignorance of this half-savage people. I am convinced of this by the prayers which their *dekanozi*[10] say and which are taken from the Church, and by their veneration of some of our saints. The Khevsurs do not believe that God is one identity. They have the following gods: the god of East; the god of West; the god of souls; Christ-God; the small god; and the great god. Besides these, they also worship *Adgilis-deda,* meaning the mother of the place; *Mukhis angelozi,* the angel of the oak; *Goris angelozi,* the angel of the mountain; *Unjis angelozi,* the angel of property; *Did-gori,* big mountain; *Thethri-Georgi,* White George; and others. From the above stated it is clear "that the Khevsurs created in their imagination the special angel-protectors to whom the Pshavs pay very little esteem, but in their turn they worship *Lasharis-jvari; Thamar-mepe,* the queen Thamar; *Kopale,* and others. Incidentally, it should be noted that the Pshavs regard as saints Queen Thamar and her son, called *Lasha Georgi* or *Lashiani Georgi* (flapmouthed George).

This same mixture of primitive beliefs and Christianity prevails also among the Svans. The Svans admit the existence of separate gods for every people on earth, for the Mohammedan peoples as well as for their neighbors and kinsmen, the Georgians of Lechkum and Ratcha, and for themselves.[11] They also believe in the existence of special angels of the forests and mountains and in the protectors of game. Accordingly, when they go into the mountains and woods on hunting expeditions, the Svans pray to their imagined local deities of the country or place in question, asking their co-operation and the success of their enterprise.

[9] Eristov: 96.
[10] *Dekanozi*—an attendant of the sanctuary.
[11] Gulbiani: 88.

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Svan

771 Consequently, if successful in hunting, the Svan considers it his
776 duty to bring, first of all, a thank-offering to the deity—the protector of game—in order to appease him and secure his help in the future.[12] The Svans usually bring their sacrifices to highly situated places. To insure the success of individuals as well as the prosperity of the country as a whole, the Svan generally subscribes to the protection of the local deity. In spite of such opinions, the Svans have a notion of the Christian Trinity, although obscure. They were converted to Christianity, as were the Khevsurs, Pshavs, and Tushes, in the historic past, and therein may lie the historical explanation of the fall and degeneration of Christianity in Svanetia as well as elsewhere in the Georgian High-
[775] lands. Historical records clearly demonstrate that the Svans and their land formed a part of the Georgian kingdom.[13] It is known that from the time of Queen Tamar's father the Georgian chronicles divided the whole of Georgia into seven parts according to the seven territories inhabited by the Georgian nation; and in the formation of these seven provinces, Svanetia was included.

Besides their political affiliation, the Svans had other ties with Georgia in their religious life. The great number of ruined and ancient churches, containing numerous preserved manuscripts, icons, crosses, etc., proves that efforts were made by the kings of Georgia to spread and strengthen the Christian faith in
[346] Svanetia. The number of churches there is very large; they are found even in the most insignificant villages; in some there are as many as five or six.[14] They are especially numerous in Free Svanetia, many half-dilapidated and ruined churches and sacred places where, according to tradition, churches once stood. In Ushkul, for example, there are twenty such ruins.

795 Examining the old Georgian ordinances, called *gujaras*, we find that the Georgian clergy exercised a great influence upon Svanetia, where it appears Christianity was at that time solidly established. The church of Svanetia stood under the rule of the Abkhazian,

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[12] The details concerning this subject are brought out in the chapter on Contract and Group Solidarity.
[13] Bakradze: a, 29.
[14] *Ibid.*, 34.

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764 The funeral customs are almost similar among all groups of Georgian Highlanders, as well as their kinsmen in the Lowlands. Only it must be noted that the Khevsurs have a special attitude toward the body of a deceased person, which they regard, as did the Hebrews of the Old Testament, as unclean. People are appointed to wash the body and bury it. They are called *narevebi*. When the dead person is a woman, the *narevebi* are girls; when it is a man, the young men perform the task. The *narevebi* are regarded as unclean for a certain period of time and are the subject of special taboos and regulations similar to those prescribed by the Mosaic laws.

All customs connected with the funeral ceremonies and the attitude of the people toward the dead person can be explained in the manner of interpretation and the beliefs which they hold about the life beyond the grave and the existence of spirits.[2] The funeral ceremonies, a description of which we are not undertaking at present, are numerous, complicated in detail, and require such large expenditures that the grief-stricken family is seldom able to pay all the necessary expenses without heavy material losses and even financial ruin without the support of their kinsmen, which support, however, is customarily given.

776 753 On the beliefs in the existence of spirits (good and evil) is founded also the conviction of the people that every possible calamity, misfortune, sickness and death originate with these evil spirits. They are regarded not only as the cause of sickness but as the personification of illness itself, and are called *batonebi*, meaning "lords," representing the plural form of the Georgian word *batoni* (lord). They are also called *angelozebi* (angels), which is also the plural form of the word *angelozi* (angel). In this case we have the terming of spirits with names taken from the Christian religion, a frequently occurring phenomenon in the Caucasus—the mixture of Christianity with the ideas of primitive religion.

These beliefs are present among all groups of the Georgian nation. Thus, for example, the Georgians of the Thelav District, Department of Tiflis,[87] believe that "all epidemic diseases have

[87] Stepanov: 99. 2 [see cat. 116, p 42ff --Analyst]

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their own angels, called *angelozebi* or *batonebi*, meaning lords. Because of their presence the people fall ill with smallpox, typhoid fever, scarlet fever, and other contagious diseases. When someone becomes ill it is not necessary to appeal to the physicians and their remedies, because by such action it is possible to offend and anger the angels of sickness. . . ." And as the only remedy in curing the sick person, the people must "please" the evil spirits with every kind of performance—dancing, singing, playing on the various musical instruments, decorating the sick person's room, etc.; and beseeching them to leave the sick person.

The information concerning the existence of similar beliefs and practices is reported from all parts of Georgia, as, for example, in the writings of T. Mamaladze,[58] A. Sagaradze,[59] Japaridze, and others.

In every kind of mischief the people try to find out the possible cause, as they think, of the anger of the spirits by various means of divination. There are different ranks of diviners, known under their Georgian names as *mlotsavi, mkitkhavi, mesultane,* and *kadagi.*

A *mlotsavi* is a person of either sex, who knows special prayers for every kind of illness and affliction. The name *mlotsavi* is derived from the Georgian word *lotsva,* meaning "a prayer." The people believe that the *mlotsavi* can heal by his prayers because he enjoys special favors in the eyes of the spirits and that his prayers will be answered and the sick man restored to health.

The prayers which are said by the *mlotsavi* are interesting for their figurative language as well as for the psychological phenomenon which they express. As examples we mention the prayers recorded by Japaridze,[60] and Mindeli[61] from the province of Ratcha; those recorded by Mamaladze[62] from the province of Guria; and those recorded by V. Bardavelidze-Lomia[63] from the province of Kartli.

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[58] Mamaladze: 45-6.
[59] Sagaradze.
[60] Japaridze: 131-37.
[61] Mindeli: 138.
[62] Mamaladze: 110-12.
[63] Bardavelidze-Lomia: 104.

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The *ejib* takes the hand of the bridegroom and the *mdadi* that of the bride, and they all walk slowly three times around the hearth (*satsetskhluli*) and the iron chain hanging upon the fireplace, called *sakideli*. The hearth is situated, usually, in the middle of the main living room of the house. The brother of the bride follows the procession and frequently strikes the iron chain with his dagger (*sakideli*) upon which the cooking pot hangs. This is done to keep the evil spirits away, as the Pshavs believe. Here we have the belief in the magical protective power of the dagger against evil spirits.

After the ceremonial walking around the hearth, the bride and groom, called "king and queen"—*mepe da dedopali*—are seated on a high sofa, called *takhta*, covered with a rug. To the right of the bride and groom is the *mejvare* (cross-bearer), and to the left the *ejibi*, then the *mdadi*, the attendants and the guests.

When the bride is seated, the ejibi puts on her lap a healthy male child and tells her: "May the Lord make you happy and give to you a son."

After this the wedding feast begins with songs, music and speeches. The wine is consumed in great quantities, but there is no drinking for the sake of drinking. The Georgian loves wine, which is abundant in his country, not merely as a drink but principally as a means of having a good time. After every feast there are speeches, songs with music, and at intervals, dancing and joking. After the wine is served to everyone, the *khevis-beri* takes the big drinking horn (*kantsi*) full of wine and announces the toast for the newlyweds, and everyone drinks to their health, shouting: *"Gaumarjos!"* meaning "May they be successful!" and *"Sheaberos!"* ("May they live long!"). The wedding feast continues sometimes for two and even three days.

The cross-bearer (*mejvare*) is obliged to be near the newlyweds, and for two days after the wedding he accompanies the bride and groom everywhere, walking before them with the cross in his hands. The *mdadi* is always with the bride during the wedding feast and the *ejibi* with the bridegroom.

The Pshavs believe that the life and every enterprise of human beings are endangered by attempts of the evil spirits to attack

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and harm them. And especially the evil spirits try with all their power to make the bride and groom unhappy—*danavsos*, as they say. To avoid this danger and to keep the evil spirits away, the attendants and friends of the bride and groom fire their guns during the time of leaving the church after the wedding, and on the way to the groom's house, and particularly before entering the house. As protection against the same danger, it is customary for the married couple to pass under crossed sabres when leaving the door of the church. This custom is observed throughout Georgia. The bridegroom, the *ejibi*, the cross-bearer (*mejvare*), the attendants and the brother of the bride are obliged to be armed with daggers. The *mdadi* sits with a dagger in her hand. This weapon is regarded by the Pshavs[11] as a sacred object (samkhto sagania), and they believe that the evil spirits are frightened by the dagger and will avoid it.

The marriage customs among the other groups of Georgian Highlanders, compared with those of the Pshavs as described above, show local variations and differences in detail. Thus among the Khevsurs, neighbors of the Pshavs, all arrangements previous to the wedding are usually made by the parents of the young people during their childhood and even when they are babies in their cribs. As a token of betrothal, the father of the groom gives to the parents of the bride an *abaz*.[12] But in spite of the early betrothal the wedding takes place only when the girl is of advanced age, not younger than twenty years old. At this time the groom sends to her a woman and two reliable men with three or four sheep, or in some communities the bridegroom sends two men with two sheep; one of the sheep is killed in the *Khati* and the other at the house of the bride. The envoys of the groom approach the house of the bride secretly and break in suddenly. The relatives of the bride, knowing well the meaning of the intrusion, must, according to custom, argue for a time with the newcomers and decline all their propositions, saying that they are not worthy of such honors. The intruders quiet them by praising the imaginary merits of the groom, and after some discussion they

[11] Khizanashvili: 135.
[12] *Abaz*—money, equivalent to twenty Russian kopecks.

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away the evil spirits, who, as they believe, are torturing the woman. This custom is preserved at present in the inaccessible mountain regions of the Caucasus, and was in ancient times practiced in the whole of Georgia, with the difference that instead of a gun the man used his bow and arrow.

This belief in the existence of the evil spirits attacking the woman in childbed and the new-born baby prevails among all groups of the Georgian Highlanders. Thus the Khevsurs believe that the evil spirits who attack the mother and the babe are small black creatures, countless in number and called *dobilebi*.[11] The people believe that the *dobilebi* live among the old deserted homes (ruins) in the village or its vicinity. Such places are known to the Khevsurs as the *banurani*. The evil spirits (*dobilebi*) annoy and disturb the human beings, although they cannot kill them. The *dobilebi* especially seek women and babies, especially children when they are ill. This is regarded by the Khevsurs as the cause of the attack of the *dobilebi*, which they express in the following words: *"Dobilthashi gekhviv."* In order to drive the evil spirits from the ill child it is necessary, as they believe, for the whole family to observe the custom called *ashlis dashla*. It consists of taking forty-five cakes, or, as they say in Georgian, *samjer khuthmeti*, meaning "three times fifteen" (from the Georgian words, *sami*, meaning three, and *khuthmeti*, meaning fifteen). Besides these forty-five pieces of bread, a special large cake is baked with cheese or meat filling and smeared on top with butter. This large cake is called *satsinao*. All these cakes are brought to the place of residence of the evil spirits and thrown to the village children, who, having been informed beforehand, are waiting by the ruins (*banurani*). The child who succeeds in catching the large cake (the *satsinao*) is regarded as the luckiest. Instead of bringing cakes, the Khevsurs sometimes kill a goat in the *banurani*. In this case the head of the animal belongs to the man who killed it and the rest to the owner.

This custom of bringing the cake or killing the animal in the *banurani*—the place regarded as the residence of the evil spirits—

[11] Bardavelidze-Lomia: 254-5.

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is nothing else than bringing a sacrifice to them in order to appease their anger and make them favorably disposed to allow the ill child to live.

Besides the babies and their mothers, according to the opinion of the Khevsurs, the evil spirits (*dobilebi*) also attack the women in general, and consequently every misfortune occurring to a woman is ascribed to the *dobilebi*. The Pshavs believe that a woman with child is pursued by the evil spirit called *matsuli*, who tries to change her baby.

Belief in the existence of evil spirits who attack babies and women prevails not only among the Khevsurs and other Georgian Highlanders, but also among all groups of the Georgian nation. Such beliefs are likewise encountered among other peoples of the Caucasian peninsula, and far away beyond the Caucasus among the peoples of Asia Minor.

Thus, the Georgians of the province of Kakhethi[12] believe in the existence of the evil creature called *Ali*, which is represented as a beautiful girl with golden locks. She enters the room of the woman in childbed and is able to kill with one stroke both mother and child.

The Georgians of Karthli and the mountain region called Mthiulni also know the creature *Ali*, which resembles in appearance and character the one described above.

The Georgians believe, according to Dr. J. Reineggs,[13] that the evil spirits—the *Luftgeister*, as he calls them in German—attack with great glee the mother and the new-born baby.

The Georgians of Meskhethi[14] have an evil spirit called the *avi-soli*, which enters the house where the woman is lying in childbed and endangers her and her child's well-being. The name *avi-suli* means "evil soul," formed from the Georgian words, *avi* (evil) and *suli* (soul).

Besides these examples, showing the belief of some of the Georgian groups in the existence of evil spirits attacking the mother and baby, similar beliefs are held by all other groups of

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[12] Chursin: a, 50; also e, 26.
[13] Reineggs: 112-113.
[14] Khakhanov: b, 10-11.

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the Georgian nation, as we shall see in reviewing their customs in protecting women and children against evil forces.

As we noted previously, similar beliefs concerning the matter under discussion are held by other peoples of the Caucasus and by the peoples of Asia Minor. Thus the Abkhazians[15] are convinced that the evil spirit whom they call *abu-ikou* attacks women in childbed.

The mountaineers of Daghestan[16] have a being similar to the *ali* of the Georgians, who is regarded as very dangerous for women in childbed and is called *Alpab*, meaning "red woman." *Alpab* is presented as a creature of very small stature, about the size of a three-year-old girl, with long red hair touching her heels. Although *Alpab* is beautiful and seems to be good-natured and harmless, in reality she is very malignant and cruel, and tries with all her power to destroy the human race.

The Jewish mountaineers of Daghestan[17] also believe in the existence of evil spirits of the female sex, similar in character to *Alpab* in Daghestan and called by them *Dedei-ol*, meaning the "mother-ol."

The Turks of Azerbaijan believe in the existence of a creature which destroys mothers and new-born babies, and which is called *Al-anasi*.

The Turks of Shemakha district[18] have a female being called *Al* with a cat's snout and red hair. She pulls out women's hair and throws it into the water and kills babies by poisoning them with her own milk.

The Udins of Vartashen[19] think that there is a creature called *Hal* which attacks the woman with child. *Hal* tries to kill the woman by taking out her heart and liver.

The Talishes[20] of the southern part of the Lencoran district also have a belief in the existence of an angry, bloodthirsty creature who attacks the mother and baby. She is represented as a black

[15] Derjavin: 15.
[16] Mamedov.
[17] Anisimov: 43.
[18] Djegangir.
[19] Bejanov: 245, 260.
[20] Chursin: e, 25.

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thank-offering for the success of the hunt, and the flesh is divided equally among all the hunters.

The Svans have especially elaborate customs connected with hunting, which they regard as a sacred affair. The religious character of the hunt is explained by their belief in the existence of deities for the protection of game and hunters. The hunters are respected by the people who consider them fortunate in enjoying the favor of the deities. According to their conviction, not everyone may succeed in the hunt, but only those who are known for their irreproachable conduct and high morality. The hunter must live a clean life and be careful in his relations with women, who are regarded as unclean. The hunter must have no intercourse with other women than his wife. Even with her he is obliged to cease relations one day before the hunting expedition. He has no right to start for the hunt when any woman in his own family is having monthly issue, nor even if such a woman be one of his own neighbors. It is also necessary for him to avoid the proximity of women with new-born babies until they have been purified by a priest.

Besides avoiding women, the hunter must pay his respects to the killed game and treat the horns, bones, and other parts of the carcass with reverence. If he does not, the hunter will be punished by the god of the hunt, who will make him unsuccessful in all his undertakings. Thus, for example, one hunter from the community of Ushkul, related[8] that ever since his brother became angry at something and threw the leg of a wild goat which he had killed into the dung-heap, he always suffer failure in the hunt.

The hunter goes alone or is accompanied by a helper, who carries his arms and other things and whose duty it is to bring home the game. He has the special name of *mikatsiri*, meaning "the carrier of the leader sack;" the word *katsi* meaning sack.

When the hunter reaches the place of his destination, where he has decided to hunt, he lights candles, fixes them upon a tree or stone along with burning coals, and throws on them the pieces of beeswax. If he has brought flour instead of bread, he bakes

[8] Dmitriev: 168.

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224 476 in which many hunters take part. In such cases, if only one of the hunters kills an animal, he gets the head, neck and pelt, while the remainder is divided equally among them all, with the assistant of the man who killed the animal having the right to choose his portion according to his own taste.

224 476 675 There is another interesting hunting custom among the Svans. When two hunters meet while hunting, if the meeting is spontaneous and not pre-arranged, they may enter into a mutual agreement with the Svan words, *sev esh'khvi*, meaning "one success." After this the fulfillment of the agreement is binding on both of them and has the character of a legal contract. They are thus obliged to divide the spoils of the hunt equally, even if it is killed by only one of them.

They hunt separately all day and meet again in the evening at the place agreed upon. The division of the spoil is not obligatory at the second meeting if the agreement was not concluded at the first, as established by custom, but the successful hunter may "treat" his partner with a portion of meat if he wishes to do so.

224 ● 776 171 Besides the Svans, the other groups of Georgian Highlanders—the Khevsurs, Pshavs, and Tushes—believe in the existence of spirits and protectors of game and hunters. These spirits are called *angelozi*.

Similar beliefs are found among other groups in the Georgian nation as well as among other peoples in the Caucasus, such as the Abkhazes, Ossetes, Circassians, and others.

Thus the Georgians of Megrelia[10] believe in the existence of the "Queen of the Forest," called *Tgashi mapa*, and represented as a beautiful woman with long hair. She is regarded as the patroness of all wild animals, and on her good will depends the success of the hunter. The Abkhazians have a patron of all game called *Ajvepsha*.[11]

224 198 171 It should be noted that in addition to the belief in the existence of forest deities and spirits which protect wild animals, some of the people of the Caucasus possess also a secret hunting language.

[10] Teptsov: b, 12.
[11] Zvanbai: Kavkaz, 81-2.

C. G. 778 be sold; touching chain or kettle gave one the status of a guest; to throw the kettle out of the hut was a supreme insult which could even require blood vengeance.

Besides the cult of the hearth, the veneration of trees was widespread in the Caucasus. The pagan cult had its rites and community prayers and offerings, and these were usually performed near a sacred grove or tree. In all Georgia there are sacred groves and trees near the Christian churches and sanctuaries. No one was allowed to cut down these trees, or to cut off a single branch, even in areas where wood was scarce, as this would entail the wrath of God.

C. G. 776 In Georgia there are traces of the worship of a Mother-god; under the name "mother of the soil" (adgilis deda) a female deity of the earth is worshipped. In the many legends about Queen Tamar, who has a place in the pantheon of the Pshav, elements of the same cult have been preserved. A deity of the woods, protector of wild animals, is called T'q'ashi mapa ("king of the woods") by the Mingrelians, Apsat (borrowed from Osset Awsati) by the Svan, Ochop'int'e by the Khevsur, Azhvepsha by the Abkhaz, Mezith ("forest-god") by the Circassians. The latter two peoples also knew a patron of the smiths, fire and iron (Abkh. Shoshu, Circ. Tlepsh). There were numerous other deities: of natural phenomena (sun, moon,

C. G. 776 thunder), often identified with Christian saints (e.g. the god of thunder with St. Elias or St. George); patrons of agriculture, of cattle breeding, of horsemen, of thieves, etc.; and also a large array of spirits, angels, witches, and wood-giants; and finally a variety C. G. of superstitions, of which may be mentioned [754] the fear of the "evil eye."

The religious worship of the Georgian C G mountain tribes has reverted to their ancient [778] tribal religion, veiled by Christian terminology. Their places of worship, called khat'i "icon" or dzhvari "cross," are small huts of rough stones, mostly standing in sacred groves. Their only adornment are pieces of cloth or horns of the Caucasian capricorn as votive offerings. The same words denote also the supernatural power residing in these huts; it is conceived as a sort of mediator between mankind and the supreme god called Morige "he who allots, distributes." Each village and each clan have their khat'i, and each tribe, too, had a common khat'i; e.g., that of the Pshav is called Lashris dzhvari, that of the Mtiul Lomisas dzhvari. Every member of the clan considers himself a "serf" (q'ma) of the khat'i, which may send him success, or disease and death. Each khat'i possessed pastures, arable land and woods where it was C. forbidden to fell a single tree. Attached to G. it was a body of functionaries who were 793 appointed temporarily or held their office by